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Section I: AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for enabling an implementation of a discount processing technique for a virtual store, said method comprising:

providing a virtual store discount schedule including separate discount schedules for a number of different suppliers of items offered for sale at said virtual store;

presenting display screens describing said items to customers, said display screen including descriptions of discounts which are available for different groups of said items in accordance with said discount schedule;

enabling a selection of items by said customers; and

presenting a purchase summary to said customers, said purchase summary including prices for selected items together with appropriate discounts as determined in accordance with said separate discount schedules.

2. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said virtual store discount schedule is comprised of a database containing individual discount schemes for a number of different suppliers.

3. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 2 wherein said separate discount schedules ~~is~~ are referenced to volume purchase levels.

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4. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 2 wherein said virtual store discount schedule is referenced to groupings of items selected.

5. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 1 and further including:

enabling a confirmation of said purchase summary by said customer whereby said customer is able to confirm the purchase of said ~~the~~ selected items by the customer.

6. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 5 and further including:

saving sales information records relating to purchases of said selected items during a predetermined period;

extracting predetermined supplier related information from said sales information records; and

notifying each of said suppliers with appropriate portions of said extracted supplier related information.

7. (Original) The method as set for in claim 6 wherein said notifying is accomplished at periodic intervals.

8. (Currently Amended) A storage medium including machine readable coded indicia, said storage medium being selectively coupled to a reading device, said reading device being selectively coupled to processing circuitry within a computer system, said reading device being selectively operable to read said machine readable coded indicia and provide program signals representative thereof, said program signals being effective to

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enable an implementation of a discount processing technique for a virtual store, said program signals being selectively operable for:

providing a virtual store discount schedule including separate discount schedules for a number of different suppliers of items offered for sale at said virtual store;

presenting display screens describing said items to customers, said display screen including descriptions of discounts which are available for different groups of said items in accordance with said discount schedule;

enabling a selection of items by said customers; and

presenting a purchase summary to said customers, said purchase summary including prices for selected items together with appropriate discounts as determined in accordance with said separate discount schedules.

9. (Currently Amended) The medium as set forth in claim 8 wherein said virtual store discount schedule is comprised of a database containing individual discount schemes for a number of different suppliers.

10. (Currently Amended) The medium as set forth in claim 9 wherein said separate discount schedules ~~is~~ are referenced to, volume purchase levels.

11. (Currently Amended) The medium as set forth in claim 9 wherein said virtual store discount schedule is referenced to groupings of items selected.

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12. (Currently Amended) The medium as set forth in claim 8 wherein said program signals are further effective for:

enabling a confirmation of said purchase summary by said customer whereby said customer is able to confirm the purchase of said ~~the~~ selected items by the customer.

13. (Currently Amended) The medium as set forth in claim 12 wherein said program signals are further effective for:

saving sales information records relating to purchases of said selected items during a predetermined period;

extracting predetermined supplier related information from said sales information records; and

notifying each of said suppliers with appropriate portions of said extracted supplier related information.

14. (Original) The medium as set for in claim 13 wherein said notifying is accomplished at periodic intervals.

15. (Currently Amended) A virtual store computer system for use in operating a virtual store in which items are offered for sale, said virtual store computer system comprising:

a system bus;

a CPU device connected to said system bus;

a memory device connected to said system bus; and

means for receiving input from a customer system with reference to screens caused by said virtual store computer system to be

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displayed on a display screen within said customer system, said memory device including a virtual store discount schedule including separate discount schedules for a number of different suppliers of items offered for sale at said virtual store, said virtual store computer system being selectively operable for:

presenting display screens to said customers describing said items to customers, said display screens including descriptions of discounts which are available for different groups of said items in accordance with said discount schedule,

enabling a selection of items by said customers; and

presenting a purchase summary to said customers, said purchase summary including prices for selected items together with appropriate discounts as determined in accordance with said separate discount schedules.

16. (Currently Amended) The virtual store computer system as set forth in claim 15 wherein said virtual store discount schedule is comprised of a database containing individual discount schemes for a number of different suppliers.

17. (Currently Amended) The virtual store computer system as set forth in claim 16 wherein said separate discount schedules ~~is~~ are referenced to volume purchase levels.

18. (Currently Amended) The virtual store computer system as set forth in claim 16 wherein said virtual store discount schedule is referenced to groupings of items selected.

19. (Currently Amended) The virtual store computer system as set forth in claim 15 wherein said program signals are further

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effective for:

enabling a confirmation of said purchase summary by said customer whereby said customer is able to confirm the purchase of said ~~the~~ selected items by the customer.

20. (Currently Amended) The virtual store computer system as set forth in claim 19 wherein said program signals are further effective for:

saving sales information records relating to purchases of said selected items during a predetermined period;

extracting predetermined supplier related information from said sales information records; and

notifying each of said suppliers with appropriate portions of said extracted supplier related information.

21. (Original) The virtual store computer system as set for in claim 20 wherein said notifying is accomplished at periodic intervals.